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PERSONAL & TOP SECRET

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FOR PERSONAL FILES ONLY

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH SECRETARY McNAMARA

Bob McNamara stopped by in order to give me Jackie's letter to Sihanouk with the request that it get to him and that we get an answer as soon as possible.

On Vietnam, he agreed on two subjects:

1. After elections, we must tie our bombing and other military policy to the objective of negotiations. He minimized the importance of these recent targets, when I complained that hitting Hanoi just at this time with the Kissinger business going on could be misinterpreted and that if we really wanted to negotiate we would have to adjust our bombing program accordingly. He fully agreed and said these targets were of no real value. He told me that he personally had dictated the message that K brought to A and M.

2. I said if we are to take up the question of negotiations seriously, we must decide on what our objective is. We could not get an unconditional surrender. He agreed, and said the proposal that came to the Norwegian Ambassador to Peking sounded good. I said, "You mean the proposal for a coalition government, including the VC, which would be non-communist and neutral?" He said, "Yes. We must make up our minds that the only way to settle this is by having a coalition government. We cannot avoid that." I said I agreed that some compromise was necessary, but that was not the view of Dean Rusk, and after the elections this issue must be brought to a head. I told him that if he made the issue, I would support him. He said, "Well, let's talk about it right after the election."

W. Averell Harriman

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